**Observation 1 is the Cuban Embargo:**

**The Castros would win a short term political victory when the embargo ended but in the long term it would collapse the ‘rally round the flag’ effect- comparatively better strategy**

[Alvaro Vargas **Llosa**](http://www.independent.org/aboutus/person_detail.asp?id=494) [a Senior Fellow of [The Center on Global Prosperity](http://www.independent.org/research/cogp/) at the Independent Institute, who has been a nationally syndicated columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group and among his books, Liberty for Latin America, received the Sir Anthony Fisher International Memorial Award for its contribution to the cause of freedom in 2006 andLessons from the Poor: Triumph of the Entrepreneurial Spirit was awarded the Templeton Freedom Award (2010). He was appointed Young Global Leader 2007 by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland] Should the Cuban Embargo be Lifted? April 29, **2009**¶ <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492>

**I have been conflicted** on this issue **for years**. Until not long ago, **I favored the embargo**. As an advocate for free trade, I would normally have called such a measure an unacceptable restriction on the freedom of people to trade with whomever they pleased. But **I thought that trading with a regime that had killed**, jailed, exiled or muzzled **countless of its citizens for decades was not a worthy objective, as it would also preserve that dictatorship. Any transaction with Cuba would also benefit the government.** After all, **the authorities were already skimming 20 percent of the remittances from Cuban-Americans** and 90 percent of the salary paid to Cubans by non-American foreign investors.¶ Eventually, I admitted to myself that there was an intolerable inconsistency in my thinking. No democracy based on liberty should tell its citizens what country to visit or whom to trade with, regardless of the government under which they live. **Even though the Castro brothers**, Fidel and Raul, **would obtain a political victory in the very short run, the embargo could no longer be justified**.¶ But this is not the reasoning coming from the most vocal critics of U.S. sanctions these days. Many of them fail to even mention the fraud that is a system which bases its legitimacy on the renunciation of capitalism and at the same time implores capitalism to come to its rescue. There is also an endearing hypocrisy among those who decry the embargo but devote hardly any time to denouncing the island’s half-century tyranny under the Castros.¶ Another risible subterfuge attributes the catastrophe that is Cuba’s economy on Washington’s decision to cut off economic relations in 1962 after a wave of expropriations against American interests. The amnesiacs conveniently forget that in 1958, Cuba’s socioeconomic condition was similar to Spain’s and Portugal’s and the standard of living of its citizens was behind only those of Argentines and Uruguayans in Latin America. Many of the critics also seem to suffer what French writer Jean-Francois Revel used to call “moral hemiplegia”—a tendency to see fault only on one side of the political spectrum: I never heard Cuba’s champions complain about sanctions against right-wing dictatorships.¶ Sometimes, sanctions work, sometimes they don’t. A study by Gary Hufbauer, Jeffrey Schott, Kimberly Elliot and Barbara Oegg titled “Economic Sanctions Reconsidered” analyzes dozens of cases of sanctions since World War I. In about a third of them, they worked either because they helped to topple the regime (South Africa) or because they forced the dictator to make major concessions (Libya). Archbishop Desmond Tutu told me a few months ago in San Francisco that he was convinced that international sanctions were crucial in defeating apartheid in his home country. In the cases in which the embargo worked, the sanctions were applied by many countries and the affected regimes were already severely discredited or weakened.¶ **In the cases in which sanctions have not worked**—**Saddam** Hussein between 1990 and 2003, **and North Korea today—the dictatorships were able to isolate themselves from the effects and concentrate them on the population.** In some countries, **a** certain **sense of pride helped defend the government against foreign sanctions**—which is why the measures applied by the Soviet Union against Yugoslavia in 1948, China in 1960 and Albania in 1961 were largely useless.¶ **In the case of Cuba, the Castro regime has been able to whip up a nationalist sentiment against the U.S. embargo.** More significantly, **it has managed to offset much of the effects over the years** in large part because the Soviets subsidized the island for three decades, because the regime welcomed Canadian, Mexican and European capital after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and because Venezuela is its new patron.¶ But **these arguments against the U.S. embargo are** mostly **practical**. Ultimately, the argument against the sanctions is a moral one. It is not acceptable for a government to abolish individual choice in matters of trade and travel. The only acceptable form of economic embargo is when citizens, not governments, decide not do business with a dictatorship, be that of Burma, Zimbabwe or Cuba.

**There are no disads to ending the embargo, it’s not effective now but the Castros are using it to solidify power**

[Steve **Chapman**](http://reason.com/people/steve-chapman/all) [a columnist and editorial writer for the Chicago Tribune]¶ It's Time to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba¶ The U.S. government has been tireless in pursuing a policy that does not look better with time¶ April 15, **2013**¶ <http://reason.com/archives/2013/04/15/its-time-to-end-the-us-embargo-of-cuba>

Well, maybe I exaggerate. It's just possible that the musical couple's presence or absence was utterly irrelevant to Cuba's future. **Americans have somewhat less control over the island than we like to imagine. The U.S. embargo of Cuba has been in effect since 1962**, with no end in sight. Fidel **Castro's government has somehow managed to outlast the Soviet Union, Montgomery Ward, rotary-dial telephones and 10 American presidents. The boycott** adheres to the stubborn logic of governmental action. It **was created to solve a problem**: the existence of a communist government 90 miles off our shores. **It failed** to solve that problem. But its failure is taken as proof of its everlasting necessity. If there is any lesson to be drawn from this dismal experience, though, it's that **the economic quarantine has been either 1) grossly ineffectual or 2) positively helpful to the regime** The first would not be surprising, if only because **economic sanctions almost never work. Iraq** under Saddam Hussein? Nope. **Iran**? Still waiting. **North Korea**? Don't make me laugh. What makes **this embargo even less promising is that we have so little help in trying to apply the squeeze. Nearly 200 countries allow trade with Cuba. Tourists from Canada and Europe flock there in search of beaches, nightlife and Havana cigars, bringing hard currency with them**. So **even if starving the country into submission could work, Cuba hasn't starved and won't anytime soon**. Nor is it implausible to suspect that **the boycott** has been the best thing that ever happened to the **Castro brothers, providing them a scapegoat for the nation's many economic ills. The implacable hostility of the Yankee imperialists also serves to align Cuban nationalism with Cuban communism**. **Even Cubans who don't like Castro may not relish being told what to do by the superpower next door**.

**The embargo sends mixed signals to the world regarding rogue regimes**

[Mitchell **Bustillo**](http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/author/mitchell-bustillo/) [will be attending Columbia University in the fall where he will be majoring in Engineering with a minor in Economics on a Pre-Law track. He is a first-generation Cuban-American, a Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. He one day hopes to return to the Hill]¶ Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo¶ May 9, **2013**¶ <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/>

When thinking of U.S.-**Cuba** relations, **the trade embargo**, or el bloqueo, **is** first and foremost **on people’s minds**. In 2009, President Barack **Obama eased the travel ban, allowing Cuban-Americans to travel freely to Cuba, and again in 2011, allowing students and religious missionaries to travel to Cuba**, as recently demonstrated by American pop culture figures, Beyoncé and her husband Jay-Z. Despite a history of hostile transgressions, **the U.S. is inconsistent with its implementation of the embargo, which sends mixed signals to Havana and displays our weak foreign policy regarding Cuba.**

**Plan: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba by ending the Cuban Embargo.**

**“Cuban Embargo” is a legally recognized term- it refers to the grouping of laws that make up US policy towards Cuba**

**Cuba Study Group** [¶ Our Mission Our mission is to help facilitate a peaceful transition in Cuba leading to a free and open society, respect for human rights and the rule of law, a productive, market-based economy and the reunification of the Cuban nation. We aim to facilitate change, help empower individuals and promote civil society development.¶ The Cuba Study Group is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization. We do not receive, nor accept, funding from any U.S. government source, or government-funded subcontractor.¶ Restoring Executive Authority Over U.S. Policy Toward Cuba¶ February **2013**

<http://www.cubastudygroup.org/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=45d8f827-174c-4d43-aa2f-ef7794831032>

**The U.S. embargo toward Cuba is a collection of prohibitions, restrictions and sanctions derived from several laws ¶ that has been in effect for more than 50 years. Taken together and compounded with the designation of Cuba as a ¶ “state sponsor of terrorism,”** they result in the most severe set of sanctions and restrictions applied against any current adversary of the United States. **This collection of sanctions was first codified into law by the Cuban Democracy ¶ Act of 1992 (“Torricelli”), severely tightened by the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (“HelmsBurton”), and modified by the Trade Sanctions and Reform Act of 2000 (“TSRA”),** thus transferring almost absolute ¶ authority over U.S. policy toward Cuba from the Executive Branch to the U.S. Congress.¶ The codification of the U.S. embargo against Cuba has failed to accomplish its objectives, as stated in Helms-Burton, ¶ of causing regime change and restoring democracy in Cuba. Continuing to ignore this obvious truth is not only counterproductive to the interests of the United States, but also increasingly damaging to Cuban civil society, including ¶ the more than 400,000 Cubans now working as licensed private entrepreneurs, because it places the burden of sanctions squarely on their shoulders to bear.¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ At a time when Cuba seems headed toward a path of change and reforms, albeit slower than desired, and a real debate ¶ seems to be emerging within Cuba’s elite regarding its future, the inflexibility of U.S. policy has the ironic effect of hurting and delaying the very changes it seeks to produce by severely limiting Cuba’s ability to implement major economic ¶ reforms and strengthening the hand of the reactionaries, rather than the reformers, within the Cuban government. ¶ Moreover, Helms-Burton and related statutory provisions in Torricelli and TSRA deny the United States the flexibility to ¶ address dynamic conditions in Cuba in a strategic and proactive way. They effectively tie the President’s hands in ¶ responding to developments on the Island, placing the impetus for taking advantage of the processes of change in Cuba ¶ in hands of hard-liners among Cuba’s ruling elites, whose interests are best served by the perpetuation of the embargo. ¶ The Cuba Study Group is publishing this whitepaper to acknowledge that a Cuba policy fundamentally based on blanket unilateral sanctions and isolation has been grossly ineffective for more than half a century; it disproportionately ¶ hurts the Cuban people and is counterproductive to the creation of an enabling transitional environment in Cuba ¶ where civil society can prosper and bring about the desired social, political and economic changes for which we long. ¶ Thus, we call for the repeal of the Helms-Burton Act, its related statutory provisions in Torricelli and TSRA, and for ¶ the restoration of authority over U.S.-Cuba policy to the Executive Branch. It is our belief that we can no longer ¶ afford to ignore the failure of this legislation.¶ Seventeen years after its enactment, the Helms-Burton Act—which further **codified** the **sanctions framework commonly referred to as the U.S. embargo against Cuba** and conditions its suspension on the existence of a transition or ¶ democratic government in Cuba—has proven to be a counterproductive policy that has failed to achieve its stated ¶ purposes in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Observation 2: The Advantages**

**Adv 1: Credibility**

**US credibility on the international stage is low now- increased engagement key**

Patrick **Duddy &** Frank O. **Mora** [Patrick Duddy served as U.S. ambassador to Venezuela from 2007 until 2010 and is currently visiting senior lecturer at Duke University. Frank O. Mora is incoming director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University, and former deputy assistant secretary of Defense, Western Hemisphere (2009-2013)]¶ ¶ 05.01.**2013**¶ ¶ ¶ Latin America: Is U.S. influence waning?¶ ¶ <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/05/01/3375160/latin-america-is-us-influence.html>

Is **U.S. influence in Latin America** on the wane? It depends how you look at it.¶ As President Obama travels to Mexico and Costa Rica, it’s likely the pundits will once again underscore what **some perceive** to be **the eroding influence of the United States in the Western Hemisphere**. Some will point to **the decline in foreign aid** or **the absence of an overarching policy** with an inspiring moniker like “Alliance for Progress” or “Enterprise Area of the Americas” as evidence that t**he United States is failing to embrace the opportunities of a region that is more important to this country than ever**.¶ The reality is a lot more complicated. Forty-two percent of all U.S. exports flow to the Western Hemisphere. In many ways, U.S. engagement in the Americas is more pervasive than ever, even if more diffused. That is in part because the peoples of the Western Hemisphere are not waiting for governments to choreograph their interactions.¶ A more-nuanced assessment inevitably will highlight **the complex, multidimensional ties between the United States and the rest of the hemisphere**. In fact, it may be that **we need to change the way we think and talk about the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean**. We also need to resist the temptation to embrace overly reductive yardsticks for judging our standing in the hemisphere.¶ As Moises Naim notes in his recent book, The End of Power, there has been an important change in power distribution in the world away from states toward an expanding and **increasingly mobile set of actors that are dramatically shaping the nature and scope of global relationships. In Latin America,** many of the most substantive and dynamic forms of engagement are occurring in a web of **cross-national relationships involving** small and large **companies, people-to-people contact through student exchanges and social media, travel and migration.¶ Trade and investment remain the most enduring and measurable dimensions of U.S. relations with the region.** It is certainly the case that **our economic interests alone would justify more U.S. attention to the region**. Many **observers** who **worry about declining U.S. influence** in this area point to the rise of trade with China and the presence of European companies and investors.

**Now is the key time- the plan sends a signal to Latin America that the US is willing to be reasonable and update its trade policies. The US can gain regional influence and cooperation by lifting the embargo, this boosts US credibility in the region and salvages regional cooperation**

ROBERT E. **WHITE** [[Robert E. White](http://www.ciponline.org/about-us/experts-staff/robert_white), a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy, was the United States ambassador to Paraguay from 1977 to 1979 and to El Salvador from 1980 to 1981]¶ Published: **March 7, 2013**¶ After Chávez, a Chance to Rethink Relations With Cuba¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/opinion/after-chavez-hope-for-good-neighbors-in-latin-america.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0&partner=rss&emc=rss>

¶ Yet for a half-century, **our policies toward our southern neighbors have alternated between intervention and neglect, inappropriate meddling and missed opportunities. The death** this week **of** President [Hugo **Chávez**](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/hugo_chavez/index.html?inline=nyt-per) of Venezuela — who along with Fidel Castro of [Cuba](http://www.nytimes.com/info/cuba?inline=nyt-geo) was perhaps the most vociferous critic of the United States among the political leaders of the Western Hemisphere in recent decades — **offers an opportunity to restore bonds with potential allies** who share the American goal of prosperity.¶ Throughout his career, the autocratic Mr. Chávez used our embargo as a wedge with which to antagonize the United States and alienate its supporters. His fuel helped prop up the rule of Mr. Castro and his brother Raúl, Cuba’s current president. **The embargo no longer serves any useful purpose** (if it ever did at all); President **Obama should end it**, though it would mean overcoming powerful opposition from Cuban-American lawmakers in Congress.¶ **An end to the Cuba embargo would send a powerful signal to all of Latin America that the United States wants a new, warmer relationship with democratic forces seeking social change throughout the Americas**.¶ I joined the State Department as a Foreign Service officer in the 1950s and chose to serve in Latin America in the 1960s. I was inspired by President John F. Kennedy’s creative response to the revolutionary fervor then sweeping Latin America. The 1959 Cuban revolution, led by the charismatic Fidel Castro, had inspired revolts against the cruel dictatorships and corrupt pseudodemocracies that had dominated the region since the end of Spanish and Portuguese rule in the 19th century.¶ Kennedy had a charisma of his own, and it captured the imaginations of leaders who wanted democratic change, not violent revolution. Kennedy reacted to the threat of continental insurrection by creating the [Alliance for Progress](http://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/AllianceforProgress), a kind of Marshall Plan for the hemisphere that was calculated to achieve the same kind of results that saved Western Europe from Communism. He pledged billions of dollars to this effort. In hindsight, it may have been overly ambitious, even naïve, but Kennedy’s focus on Latin America rekindled the promise of the [Good Neighbor Policy](http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/GoodNeighbor) of Franklin D. Roosevelt and transformed the whole concept of inter-American relations.¶ Tragically, **after Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, the ideal of** the Alliance for Progress crumbled and “la noche mas larga” — “the longest night” — began for the proponents of **Latin American democracy. Military regimes flourished, democratic governments withered, moderate political and civil leaders were labeled Communists, rights of free speech and assembly were curtailed and human dignity crushed, largely because the United States abandoned all standards save that of anti-Communism**.¶ During my Foreign Service career, I did what I could to oppose policies that supported dictators and closed off democratic alternatives. In 1981, as the ambassador to [El Salvador](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/elsalvador/index.html?inline=nyt-geo), I refused a demand by the secretary of state, [Alexander M. Haig Jr.](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/us/politics/21haig.html), that I use official channels to cover up the Salvadoran military’s responsibility for the murders of four American churchwomen. [I was fired and forced out of the Foreign Service.](http://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/12/world/former-envoy-to-el-salvador-says-his-views-have-led-to-his-ouster.html)¶ The Reagan administration, under the illusion that Cuba was the power driving the Salvadoran revolution, turned its policy over to the Pentagon and C.I.A., with predictable results. During the 1980s the United States helped expand the Salvadoran military, which was dominated by uniformed assassins. We armed them, trained them and covered up their crimes.¶ After our counterrevolutionary efforts failed to end the Salvadoran conflict, the Defense Department asked its research institute, the RAND Corporation, what had gone wrong. RAND analysts found that United States policy makers had refused to accept the obvious truth that the insurgents were rebelling against social injustice and state terror. As a result, “we pursued a policy unsettling to ourselves, for ends humiliating to the Salvadorans and at a cost disproportionate to any conventional conception of the national interest.”¶ Over the subsequent quarter-century, a series of profound political, social and economic changes have undermined the traditional power bases in Latin America and, with them, longstanding regional institutions like the Organization of American States. The organization, which is headquartered in Washington and which excluded Cuba in 1962, was seen as irrelevant by Mr. Chávez. He promoted the creation of the [Community of Latin American and Caribbean States](http://www.celac.gob.ve/index.php?lang=en) — which excludes the United States and Canada — as an alternative.¶ At a regional meeting that included Cuba and excluded the United States, Mr. Chávez said that “the most positive thing for the independence of our continent is that we meet alone without the hegemony of empire.”¶ Mr. **Chávez was masterful at manipulating America’s antagonism toward Fidel Castro as a rhetorical stick with which to attack the United States as an imperialist aggressor, an enemy of progressive change, interested mainly in treating Latin America as a vassal continent, a source of cheap commodities and labor.¶** Like its predecessors, **the Obama administration has given few signs that it has grasped the magnitude of these changes or cares about their consequences**. After President Obama took office in 2009, Latin America’s leading statesman at the time, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then **the president of Brazil**, urged Mr. Obama to normalize relations with Cuba.¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ **Lula**, as he is universally known, correctly **identified our Cuba policy as the chief stumbling block to renewed ties with Latin America**, as it had been since the very early years of the Castro regime.¶ After the failure of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Washington set out to accomplish by stealth and economic strangulation what it had failed to do by frontal attack. But the clumsy mix of covert action and porous boycott succeeded primarily in bringing shame on the United States and turning Mr. Castro into a folk hero.¶ And even now, despite the relaxing of travel restrictions and Raúl Castro’s announcement that he will retire in 2018, the implacable hatred of many within the Cuban exile community continues. The fact that two of the three Cuban-American members of the Senate — Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas — are rising stars in the Republican Party complicates further the potential for a recalibration of Cuban-American relations. (The third member, Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, is the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but his power has been weakened by a continuing ethics controversy.)¶ **Are there any other examples in the history of diplomacy where the leaders of a small, weak nation can prevent a great power from acting in its own best interest merely by staying alive?¶** The re-election of President Obama, and the death of Mr. Chávez, give America a chance to reassess the irrational hold on our imaginations that Fidel Castro has exerted for five decades. The president and his new secretary of state, John Kerry, should quietly reach out to Latin American leaders like President [Juan Manuel Santos](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/juan_manuel_santos/index.html) of Colombia and [José Miguel Insulza](http://www.oas.org/en/about/secretary_general.asp), secretary general of the Organization of American States. **The message should be simple: The president is prepared to show some flexibility on Cuba and asks your help.¶ Such a simple request could transform the Cuban issue from a bilateral problem into a multilateral challenge.** It would then be up to Latin Americans to devise a policy that would help Cuba achieve a sufficient measure of democratic change to justify its reintegration into a hemisphere composed entirely of elected governments.¶ **If**, however, **our present policy paralysis continues, we will soon see the emergence of two rival camps, the United States versus Latin America**. While Washington would continue to enjoy friendly relations with individual countries like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, **the vision of** Roosevelt and Kennedy of a **hemisphere** of **partners cooperating in matters of common concern would be reduced to a historical footnote.**

**US-Latin American relations solve a laundry list of existential scenarios**

**Shifter 12** (Michael is the President of Inter-American Dialogue. “Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America,” April, IAD Policy Report, <http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf>)  
  
**There are compelling reasons for the United States and Latin America to pursue more robust ties . Every country in the Americas would benefit from strengthened and expanded economic relations, with improved access to each other’s markets, investment capital, and energy resources** . Even with its current economic problems, the United States’ $16-trillion economy is a vital market and source of capital (including remittances) and technology for Latin America, and it could contribute more to the region’s economic performance . **For its part, Latin America’s rising economies will inevitably become more and more crucial to the United States’ economic future . The United States and many nations of Latin America and the Caribbean would also gain a great deal by more cooperation on such global matters as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, and democracy and human rights** . With a rapidly expanding US Hispanic population of more than 50 million, the cultural and demographic integration of the United States and Latin America is proceeding at an accelerating pace, **setting a firmer basis for hemispheric partnership.**

**Adv 2: Economy**

**Economic collapse is coming now- multiple warrants**

Michael T. **Snyder** [a graduate of the University of Florida law school and he worked as an attorney in Washington D.C.. Today, Michael is best known for his work as the publisher of The Economic Collapse Blog] FEBRUARY 21, **2013**¶ WARNING: 20 Signs The U.S. Economy May Collapse in Coming Months¶ <http://www.mrconservative.com/2013/02/5125-signs-us-economy-may-collapse-in-coming-months/>

Is the **U.S. economy** about to experience a **major downturn**? Unfortunately, **there are a whole bunch of signs that economic activity in the United States is really slowing down right now**. Freight volumes and freight expenditures are way down, consumer confidence has declined sharply, major retail chains all over America are closing hundreds of stores, and the “sequester” threatens to give the American people their first significant opportunity to experience what “austerity” tastes like. Gas prices are going up rapidly, corporate insiders are dumping massive amounts of stock and there are high profile corporate bankruptcies in the news almost every single day now.¶ In many ways, what we are going through right now feels very similar to 2008 before the crash happened. Back then the warning signs of economic trouble were very obvious, but our politicians and the mainstream media insisted that everything was just fine, and the stock market was very much detached from reality. When the stock market did finally catch up with reality, it happened very, very rapidly. Sadly, most people do not appear to have learned any lessons from the crisis of 2008. Americans continue to rack up staggering amounts of debt, and Wall Street is more reckless than ever. **As a society, we seem to have concluded that 2008 was just a temporary malfunction rather than an indication that our entire system was fundamentally flawed. In the end, we will pay a great price for our overconfidence and our recklessness**.¶ So what will the rest of 2013 bring?¶ Hopefully the economy will remain stable for as long as possible, but right now things do not look particularly promising.¶ **There are 20 signs the U.S. Economy may collapse in the coming months**…..¶ **Gas prices**, which were sky high, **are now back on the rise**, and predicted in the future only to rise more¶ #1 **Freight shipment volumes have hit their lowest level in two years**, and freight expenditures have gone negative for the first time since the last recession.¶ #2 The average price of a gallon of gasoline has risen by more than 50 cents over the past two months. This is making things tougher on our economy, because nearly every form of economic activity involves moving people or goods around.¶ #3 Reader’s Digest, once one of the most popular magazines in the world, has filed for bankruptcy.¶ #4 Atlantic City’s newest casino, Revel, has just filed for bankruptcy. It had been hoped that Revel would help lead a turnaround for Atlantic City.¶ #5 A state-appointed review board has determined that **there is “no satisfactory plan” to solve Detroit’s financial emergency**, and many believe that **bankruptcy is imminent**. If **Detroit** does declare bankruptcy, it **will be the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.**¶ Cel **phone sales**, once **taken as a sign of global economic growth, are now for the first time in decline**¶ #6 David Gallagher, the CEO of Town Sports International, recently said that his company is struggling right now because consumers simply do not have as much disposable income anymore…¶ “As we moved into January membership trends were tracking to expectations in the first half of the month, but fell off track and did not meet our expectations in the second half of the month. We believe the driver of this was **the rapid decline in consumer sentiment** that has been reported and **is connected to the reduction in net pay consumers earn given the changes in tax rates that went into effect in January.**”¶ #7 According to the Conference Board, **consumer confidence in the U.S. has hit its lowest level in more than a year**.¶ #8 Sales of the Apple iPhone have been slower than projected, and as a result Chinese manufacturing giant FoxConn has instituted a hiring freeze. The following is from a CNET report that was posted on Wednesday…¶ The Financial Times noted that it was the first time since a 2009 downturn that the company opted to halt hiring in all of its facilities across the country. The publication talked to multiple recruiters.¶ The actions taken by Foxconn fuel the concern over the perceived weakened demand for the iPhone 5 and slumping sentiment around Apple in general, with production activity a leading indicator of interest in the product.¶ #9 In 2012, global cell phone sales posted their first decline since the end of the last recession.¶ #10 **We appear to be in the midst of a “retail apocalypse”**. It is being projected that **Sears, J.C. Penney, Best Buy and RadioShack will also close hundreds of stores by the end of 2013**.¶ The “sequester” which could go into effect on March 1st, could cripple the economy.¶ #11 An internal memo authored by a Wal-Mart executive that was recently leaked to the press said that February sales were a “total disaster” and that the beginning of February was the “worst start to a month I have seen in my ~7 years with the company.”¶ #12 If Congress does not do anything and “sequestration” goes into effect on March 1st, the Pentagon says that approximately 800,000 civilian employees will be facing mandatory furloughs.¶ #13 Barack Obama is admitting that the “sequester” could have a crippling impact on the U.S. economy. The following is from a recent CNBC article…¶ Obama cautioned that if the $85 billion in immediate cuts — known as the sequester — occur, the full range of government would feel the effects. Among those he listed: furloughed FBI agents, reductions in spending for communities to pay police and fire personnel and teachers, and decreased ability to respond to threats around the world.¶ He said the consequences would be felt across the economy.¶ “**People will lose their jobs**,” he said. “**The unemployment rate might tick up again**.”¶ #14 If the “sequester” is allowed to go into effect, the CBO is projecting that it will cause U.S. GDP growth to go down by at least 0.6 percent and that it will “reduce job growth by 750,000 jobs”.¶ #15 According to a recent Gallup survey, 65 percent of all Americans believe that 2013 will be a year of “economic difficulty”, and 50 percent of all Americans believe that the “best days” of America are now in the past.¶ GDP growth was 1.5% in 2012, every time GDP is this low for an entire year – across U.S. History, a recession has always followed.¶ #16 U.S. GDP actually contracted at an annual rate of 0.1 percent during the fourth quarter of 2012. This was the first GDP contraction that the official numbers have shown in more than three years.¶ #17 **For the entire year of 2012, U.S. GDP growth was only about 1.5 percent**. According to Art Cashin, **every time GDP growth has fallen this low for an entire year, the U.S. economy has always ended up going into a recession**.¶

**The plan solves it- Lifting the embargo creates jobs in both nations and increases trade- boosts the economy all around**

SAUL **LANDAU and** NELSON P. **VALDES**¶ [Saul Landau, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Pomona,Nelson P. Valdes is Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico]¶ JANUARY 29, **2013**¶ A Boon for Cuban-American Entrepreneurs¶ The Economics of the Cuban Embargo¶ <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/01/29/the-economics-of-the-cuban-embargo/>

**The time has come** and almost gone **for Washington to repair its broken relations with Cuba.** For 53 years the White House has maintained a punishing embargo on trade with Cuba. Its proponents, with the goal of removing Cuba’s revolutionary government, still plead: “give it time.”¶ In 2001 President George W. Bush allowed for an exception permitting US companies to sell agricultural products to Cuba for immediate payment, although imports from Cuba remained off limits. Other economic sectors received no benefits.¶ **Cuban Americans** particularly from south Florida **now export goods and remittances to** relatives and friends while importing profits from sales made to fellow Cubans in **Cuba, giving them an advantage denied to the rest of the country**.¶ Washington pundits attribute superhuman strength to the anti-Castro lobby; thus no President would attempt to lift the trade and travel embargoes on the island. Yet, Cuban Americans trade with and travel to Cuba freely on a daily basis. The “embargo” applies to everyone except Cuban Americans.¶ **This growing international trade, disguised as sending goods to needy family members in Cuba, now includes filling the hulls on 10 or more daily charter flights from US cities to Cuba**. Cuban Americans send goods, often with “mules,” to provide family members in Cuba, needing supplies for their businesses. The “mules” return with cash, derived from sales of these goods. **Some of the new Cuban stores and restaurants supplied by Miami-based Cubans make substantial profits, some of which get spent in Cuba, and ends up in Cuba’s central bank.¶ Miami,** the United States’ poorest large city, **derives income because it provides jobs involved in buying and selling the goods sent to Cuba. Jobs** also **arise** from routine tasks created **around** the daily **charter flights** to and from Cuba, and **the fees collected** from take offs and landings. **Add to this, the work for accountants, book-keepers and others**.¶ Some unemployed Cuban Americans get jobs as mules transporting the goods and money from one country to the other. Miami **banks** also **benefit**.¶ In Cuba, this **trade** also **creates jobs and wealth**. Mercedes runs a paladar [private restaurant]in Havana’s Vedado neighborhood, “because we draw tourists who like good food, which I serve at my paladar.”¶ Some paladar customers flew to Havana from Miami. These Cuban Americans come to visit relatives and maybe check on their new investments in Havana family-run businesses. “Relatives in Florida **supply** me with food I can’t get easily in Cuba,” Mercedes said, “like some spices, **and packaged goods. I send them money for** these **products. They make a profit, and so do I. The government makes money from taxes** I pay, **and jobs grow in Cuba’s tourist industry**.”¶ US-based charter flights have full hulls, even those with few passengers. One charter flight company manager told us: “Passengers don’t matter that much. The hull is totally full.”¶ Much of the Cuba trade flows through the Miami International Airport, meaning capital moves from the US to Cuba; most of the luggage contents, however, remain in Cuba. The boon to Miami airport services means jobs, fees and taxes, which remain as capital in south Florida. The goods purchased in south Florida by Cubans (relatives, mules, etc) benefit local businesses.¶ This **trade multiplies jobs** throughout the area — as well as it does for Cuba: In Miami **sales emanate** from stores **and lead to jobs in transportation, parking, hotel facilities, restaurants, and luggage-handling**. Count the businesses providing services to the people traveling to Cuba and sending goods there. **Don’t omit the expanded police force, and extra officials required in immigration, and customs; nor fail to consider jobs servicing air planes, and their jetways, and additional personnel needed for landings and take offs, and extra jobs in airport administration and maintenance created by expanded travel**. Think of Miami’s increased tax revenues.¶ South Florida represents a Cuban settler state within the United States. It counters its interests against those of the dominant society, with the society’s ignorant acquiescence. The Miami-based Cuban Americans and their Cuba-based families have used US-Cuba policy, the embargo representing the power of the nation for their own self-interest, and in order to attain a comparative advantage vis a vis the rest of the American population.¶ Since 1960, commitment to overthrow of the Cuban government has functioned as US foreign policy on Cuba, a policy now controlled informally by south Florida Cuban-Americans. The Cuban American ethnic enclave assumed the political power needed to turn south Florida into an autonomous Cuban settler state inside US boundaries, so that the embargo does not get applied to the Cuban American enclave. The enclave barons use the embargo to secure, for themselves, a protection of the Cuba trade monopoly. This challenges stated US national interests.¶ Camouflaged by ubiquitous anti-Castro rhetoric, the Cuban American entrepreneurs have manufactured a lucrative business with the island, regulated by the very government they pretend to hate. The rightwing congressional representatives pretend to fight for every law to punish the “Castro regime” while in practice turn a dead eye to the growing trade that helps Florida’s and Cuba’s economy. Preserve the embargo, but make an exception for Cuban Americans.¶ **By recognizing the facts about this trade, the White House might become inspired to lift the embargo – a move to benefit all Americans. US government revenue would grow from opening trade and travel with Cuba.** In the process we might also regain a missing piece of US sovereignty!

**Economic conflicts cause extinction**

**Daguzan 2010** (Citing Jean Francois, PhD and Senior Research Fellow at the Foundation for Strategic Research, "Economic crisis threatens existence of human beings" November 26, 2010, Right Vision News, pg online @ lexisnexis)

The financial and **economic crisis** being faced by the world **is** in fact **a** human **catastrophe** **as it may threaten**the well-being and **existence** of human beings in the globe, **said** Dr. Jean-Francois Daguzan, **senior research fellow at the Foundation for Strategic Research, France**.¶ ¶ He was speaking at a roundtable discussion on ‘The Strategic Consequences of World Financial and Economic Crisis’ organised by the South Asia Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) here on Wednesday. Former ambassador Tasawur Naqvi conducted the proceedings.¶ ¶ Dr. Jean-Francois Daguzan said that **the crisis could lead to violence**. **Every effort should be made to control it as it may lead to risky and dangerous situations**. He said that **the balance of power had already changed.¶** ¶ He said that if economic crisis is compared with 9/11 and invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the World Trade Centre debacle seemed to be a contingent affair. **The financial crisis** to him **was like a nuclear war,** **which is tilting the balance of power in the world**. He said that an amount of $50,000 billion went to the aid of developing nations. He noted the impact of the snowballing crisis on stock exchanges and investment potential of different countries. He said that the crisis also affected stability of nations by impacting equities and stock exchanges.¶ ¶ He said that **the war in currencies is the last impact** of the crisis **in an age of artificial monetary powers of currencies, which would provoke and continue with economic crises within countries**. He said that it is rebalancing the power politics in the world. He enumerated Southeast Asia’s economies facing problems in 1988 when China was big, but not enough to become the lone competitor of the west.

**Adv 3: Democracy**

**Best empirical research proves trade liberalization like the plan spurs democracy**

Daniel T. **Griswold** [associate director of the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.¶ Before joining Cato, he served for 12 years as editorial page editor of The Gazette — the Colorado Springs, Colorado daily newspaper]¶ January 23, **2004**¶ Globalist Perspective > Global Economy Does Trade Promote Democracy? <http://www.theglobalist.com/storyid.aspx?storyid=3714>

**Political scientists have long noted the link between economic openness** on one side, **and political reform and democracy** on the other. When the Cato Institute's Daniel Griswold examined this theory in a new study, he not only came up with a fascinating ranking system — but also discovered some truly strange bedfellows.¶ **Increased trade and economic integration promote civil and political freedoms directly by opening a society to new technology**, communications **and democratic ideas**.¶ Freedom through trade?¶ **Economic liberalization provides a counterweight to governmental power — and creates space for civil society.**¶ And **by promoting faster growth, trade promotes political freedom indirectly by creating an economically independent and political aware middle class**.¶ The evidence from a new study that I authored for the Cato Institute, Trading Tyranny for Freedom: How Open Markets Till the Soil for Democracy, finds that **those assertions rest on solid ground — in theory as well as the real world.** [Click here](http://www.theglobalist.com/storyid.aspx?storyid=3714#box) for a quick overview of how the study was conducted.¶ **A striking correlation¶ The connection becomes evident** when countries are grouped by quintiles — or fifths — according to their economic openness.¶ **Of the 25 rated countries in the top quintile of economic openness, 21 are rated "Free" by Freedom House — and only one is rated "Not Free."¶** Strange bedfellows¶ In contrast, among the quintile of countries that are the least open economically, only seven are rated "Free" and nine are rated "Not Free."¶ In other words, **the most economically open countries are three times more likely to enjoy full political and civil freedoms as those that are economically closed. Those that are closed are nine times more likely to completely suppress civil and political freedoms as those that are open**.¶ The chart below produces its share of strange bedfellows. Despite their ideological and diplomatic differences, the United States and France occupy almost exactly the same real estate in terms of political freedom and economic openness.

**Pressure fails to spur democracy in Cuba- only the plan’s removal of the antagonism fosters it**

LARRY **BIRNS** [COHA-Council of Hemispheric Affairs- DIRECTOR]**AND** FREDERICK B. **MILLS**[COHA SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW ]¶ [Best Time for U.S.– Cuba Rapprochement Is Now](http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/)¶ –JANUARY 30, **2013**¶ <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>

The anti-Castro lobby and their allies in the US Congress argue that the reforms coming out of Havana are too little too late and that political repression continues unabated. They continue to see the embargo as a tool for coercing either more dramatic reforms or regime change. It is true that **the reformist tendency in Cuba does not include a qualitative move from a one party system to political pluralism**. Lamentably, Cuba reportedly continues to use temporary detentions and the occasional jailing of non-violent dissidents to limit the parameters of political debate and total freedom of association. The authors agree that no non-violent Cuban dissident should be intimidated, detained or jailed. But **continuing to maliciously turn the screws on Havana has never provided an incentive for more democracy in any sense of the word nor has it created a political opening into which Cuba**, with confidence, **could enter. The easing of tensions between Washington and Havana is more likely to contribute to the evolution of a** more **democratic form** of socialism on the island, the early stages of which we may presently be witnessing. In any case the precise form of such change inevitably should and will be decided in Cuba, not in Washington or Miami.

**The embargo crushes democracy in Cuba by encouraging Cuba work with anti-democratic nations. The plan sends a strong signal to push for widespread democracy**

Daniel **Hanson**, Dayne **Batten &** Harrison **Ealey** [Daniel Hanson is an economics researcher at the American Enterprise Institute.  Dayne Batten is affiliated with the University of North Carolina Department of Public Policy.  Harrison Ealey is a financial analyst]¶ It's Time For The U.S. To End Its Senseless Embargo Of Cuba¶ 1/16/**2013** ¶ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2013/01/16/its-time-for-the-u-s-to-end-its-senseless-embargo-of-cuba/>

What’s worse, **U.S. sanctions encourage Cuba to collaborate with regional players that are less friendly to American interests**. For instance, in 2011, **the country inked a deal with Venezuela for the construction of an underwater communications link, circumventing its need to connect with US-owned networks close to its shores**.¶ **Repealing the embargo would fit into an American precedent of lifting trade and travel restrictions to countries who demonstrate progress towards democratic ideals**. Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were all offered normal trade relations in the 1970s after preliminary reforms even though they were still in clear violation of several US resolutions condemning their human rights practices. China, a communist country and perennial human rights abuser, is the U.S.’s second largest trading partner, and in November, trade restrictions against Myanmar were lessened notwithstanding a fifty year history of genocide and human trafficking propagated by its military government.¶ Which, of course, **begs the question: when will the U.S. see fit to lift the embargo? If Cuba is trending towards democracy and free markets, what litmus test must be passed for the embargo to be rolled back?¶ The cost of the embargo** to the United States is high in both dollar and moral terms, but it is higher **for the Cuban people, who are cut off from the supposed champion of liberty in their hemisphere because of an antiquated Cold War dispute. The progress being made in Cuba could be accelerated with the help of American** charitable relief, **business innovation, and tourism.¶ A perpetual embargo on a developing nation that is moving towards reform makes little sense**, especially when America’s allies are openly hostile to the embargo. **It keeps a broader discussion about smart reform in Cuba from gaining life,** and it makes no economic sense. It is time for the embargo to go.

**And democracy is good**

1. **Democracy creates conditions that stave off wars**

Gregg **Easterbrook**, writer, lecturer, and a senior editor of [The New Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Republic). He was a fellow at the [Brookings Institution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brookings_Institution), a Washington, D.C. think tank, “The End of War?” THE NEW REPUBLIC, May 30, **2005**, p. 18.

The spread of democracy has made another significant contribution to the decline of war. In 1975, only one-third of the world's nations held true multiparty elections; today two-thirds do, and the proportion continues to rise. In the last two decades, some 80 countries have joined the democratic column, while hardly any moved in the opposite direction. Increasingly, developing-world leaders observe the simple fact that the **free nations are the strongest and richest ones, and this creates a powerful argument for the expansion of freedom**. Theorists at least as far back as Immanuel Kant have posited that democratic societies would be much less likely to make war than other kinds of states. So far, this has proved true: Democracy-against-democracy fighting has been extremely rare. **Prosperity and democracy tend to be mutually reinforcing. Now prosperity is rising in most of the world**, amplifying the trend toward freedom. **As ever-more nations become democracies, ever-less war can be expected, which is exactly what is being observed**.

1. **Democracy is key to prevent environmental destruction**

Eric **Neumayer**, Professor of Environment and Development at the London School of Economics (LSE)

Head of the Department of Geography and Environment , JOURNAL OF PEACE RESEARCH, March **2002**, pp. 156-159.

Taken together, the results reported in the last section provide strong evidence in favour of our hypothesis that **democracies exhibit stronger international environmental commitment than non-democracies.** This result appears to be relatively robust with respect to our different measures of environmental commitment. For the great majority of these proxies of environmental commitment, the democracy variables not only have the expected sign, but are also statistically significant. It is also quite robust with respect to our different measures of democracy. No single measure of democracy provides systematically different estimates in terms of sign of coefficients and their statistical significance from the other three.21 Equally satisfying is that the coefficients and their significance remain roughly the same whether developed countries are included in the full sample or excluded in the restricted sample. In other words, **the results are not simply triggered by the presence of developed democratic countries**. Almost throughout, we observe that the coefficients for the FREE-low, POLIT-low and GOV-low countries indicate less environmental commitment at stronger statistical significance than the coefficients for the FREE-mid, POLIT-mid and GOVmid countries. In other words, **clearly undemocratic countries exhibit even less environmental commitment than countries in the middle group,** and we can be more certain that their commitment differs significantly from clear democracies than we can be for the group in between. This was to be expected, of course. In conclusion, this study provides a positive message: **Democracies clearly show stronger environmental commitment than non-democracies. All other things being equal, therefore, a more democratic world will also be a world with stronger environmental commitment**. This need not translate into better environmental outcomes, however, at least not immediately. Theory predicts a stronger link of democracy with environmental commitment than with outcomes. Gleditsch & Sverdrup (1996: 8) suspect this much when they write that ‘the crucial point is that regardless of what harm democracies may do to the environment, they are more likely to make corrective action’. **As democracy spreads around the world, so will environmental commitment. More environmental commitment will help preventing environmental scarcities from leading to extreme outcomes like violent conflict. There is thus another avenue through which democracy can foster peace**. This is not to say that democracies do not suffer from deficiencies and even failures with respect to environmental commitment. For example, future generations are affected by environmental degradation, but cannot express their preferences in the political market-place of the present. Environmental degradation cuts across national boundaries, which is likely to lead to excessive global environmental pollution in the absence of a central political authority (world government). Environmental degradation also cuts across administrative boundaries within nation-states, which renders policies successfully addressing these problems more difficult (Doeleman, 1997). But the point is that non-democracies equally suffer from these deficiencies, if not more. **While democracy is less than perfect, there is no better alternative.** Of course, democracy is not a static concept and it evolves over time. Some argue that the modern Western model of representative democracy with infrequent elections, substantial influence of lobby groups benefiting from environmental degradation, little mobilization of the people and limited participation outside well-defined and narrow boundaries is ill equipped to deal with long-term environmental problems and therefore needs to be transformed into a more ‘deliberative’ or ‘associative’ democracy (Lafferty & Meadowcroft, 1996; Doeleman, 1997). Addressing these issues is beyond the limits of this article, however, and is left to future research. Suffice it to say here that, again, while representative democracy might not be perfect, it is surely better than any non-democratic alternative.

**Environmental destruction isn’t inevitable but it would cause extinction**

**Agence France-Presse**, June 6, **2012** ¶ Environmental collapse now a serious threat: scientists¶ <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/06/06/environmental-collapse-now-a-serious-threat-scientists/>

Climate change, population growth and **environmental destruction could cause a collapse of the ecosystem just a few generations from now**, scientists warned on Wednesday in the journal Nature.¶ The paper by 22 top researchers said **a “tipping point” by which the biosphere goes into swift and irreversible change, with** potentially **cataclysmic impacts for humans, could occur as early as this century.¶ The warning contrasts with a** mainstream **view** among scientists **that environmental collapse would be gradual** and take centuries.¶ The study appears ahead of the June 20-22 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, the 20-year followup to the Earth Summit that set down priorities for protecting the environment.¶ The Nature paper, written by biologists, ecologists, geologists and palaeontologists from three continents, compared the biological impact of past episodes of global change with what is happening today.¶ The factors in today’s equation include a world population that is set to rise from seven billion to around 9.3 billion by mid-century and global warming that will outstrip the UN target of two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).¶ The team determined that **once 50-90 percent of small-scale ecosystems become altered, the** entire **eco-web tips** over **into a new state, characterised** especially **by** species **extinctions.¶ Once the shift happens, it cannot be reversed**.¶ To support today’s population, about 43 percent of Earth’s ice-free land surface is being used for farming or habitation, according to the study.¶ On current trends, the 50 percent mark will be reached by 2025, a point the scientists said is worryingly close to the tipping point.¶ If that happened, **collapse would entail a** shocking **disruption for the world’s food supply**, with bread-basket regions curtailed in their ability to grow corn, wheat, rice, fodder and other essential crops.¶ “It really will be a new world, biologically, at that point,” said lead author Anthony Barnosky, a professor of integrative biology at the University of California in Berkeley.¶ “The data suggests that **there will be a reduction in biodiversity and severe impacts on much of what we depend on to sustain our quality of life**, including, for example, fisheries, agriculture, forest products and clean water. This could happen within just a few generations.”¶ The authors stressed it was unclear when this feared tipover would happen, given blanks in knowledge about the phenomenon.¶ And they said **there were plenty of solutions** — such as ending unsustainable patterns of growth and resource waste — **that mean it is not inevitable.**